WRITTEN ANSWERS TO UNSTARRED QUESTIONS

Recommendations of the Murari Committee

88. SHRI C.O. POULOSE: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state the recommendations made by the Murari Committee and how many of them are being implemented?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (DR. DEBENDRA PRADHAN): The recommendations of the Murari Committee are given in the Statement-I (*See* below). The recommendations which have been implemented or are in the process of being implemented are given in Statement-II.

Statement I

Recommendations of the Murari Committee on Deep Sea Fishing Policy

1. All permits issued for fishing by joint venture/charter/lease/ test fishing should immediately be cancelled subject to legal processes as may be required.
2. No renewal, extension or new licenses/permits be issued in future for fishing to joint venture/charter/lease/test fishing vessels.
3. All licences/permits for fishing may be made public documents and copy thereof made available for inspection in the office of the registered authority.
4. The areas already being exploited or which may be exploited in the medium term by fishermen operating traditional craft or mechanised vessels below 20 m size should not be permitted for exploitation by any vessels above 20 m length except currently operated Indian vessels which may operate in the current area for only 3 years subject to the recommendations 1 & 7.
5. Since the Indian mechanised boats below 20 m size have the

capacity to fish in depths upto about 70—90 m; on the West Coast, the distance from the shore represented by 150 m depth line should be out of bounds for all vessels of more than 20 m length except vessels mentioned at para 4. Where the 150 m depth zone is less than 100 nautical miles from the shore, the distance upto 100 nautical miles should be reserved for Indian vessels less than 20 m length. On the east coast, starting from Kanyakumari, Indian vessels below 20 m size would have exclusive access upto 100 m depth or 50 nautical miles from the shore whichever is farther except relaxation in Para 4. The depth zone would also be defined by coordinates indicating distance from the shore. Distance will be determined by National Hydrographic Office/Coast Guard/ Fishery Survey of India.

6. In regard to Andaman & Nicobar and the Lakshadweep groups of islands, a distance of 50 nautical miles from the shore would be reserved exclusively for Indian vessels below 20 m length with proviso at para 4. Further, if so required, the limit would be defined taking into account the need to keep waters between islands reserved exclusively for Indian vessels, even if some portions fall beyond the limit of 50 nautical miles.

7. In the area open to the vessels above 20 m length, resource specific vessels for tuna and tuna like fishes, squids and cuttle fish, deep sea fin-fishes in mid-water or pelagic regions and oceanic tuna may be allowed for exploitation by tuna long lining, tuna purse seining, squid jigging and mid-water trawling, provided these are defacto Indian owned registered vessels. The Indian owners should account for at least 51% debt as well as equity.

8. The fleet size for different fishing grounds may be fixed taking into account of the maximum sustainable yield and the need for conservation of resources.

9. In order to conserve fishery resources in our waters, to protect fishermen and to reduce conflicts in the sea, deep sea

fishing regulations should be enacted by the Parliament after consulting the fishing community.

10. For preventing conflicts between the traditional, small mechanised, larger deep sea vessels strict vigilance to be exercised by the Coast Guard. To attain this objective the Coast Guard should be strengthened, expanded, upgraded technically with the State-of-the-art system of navigation, surveillance and weaponary and properly tasked to prevent poaching by foreign vessels and observance of zone restriction by indigenous vessles. In case Coast Guard is not able to perform the task then by some other agency State or Central, would be identified to ensure that those vessels excluded from specific areas do not violate prohibitions.

11. The Government should take active steps as well as make finances available for upgradation of technological skills and equipment used by the traditional fishermen, for mechanised boats and the Indian deep sea fishing fleet so that each can effectively fish in the areas reserved for it by law or usage. Duty concessions and concessional finance should be made available for both navigational as well as fishing equipment aimed at competence upgradation to the state-of-the-art level to all the three categories with priority to the traditional sector.

12. Traditional and small mechanised sector should be assisted by adequate regular supply of fuel and by providing HSD and kerosene and by providing subsidy taking into account the benefits given to deep sea fishing vessels.

13. All types of marine fisheries should come under one Ministry. The Government should also consider setting up a Fishery Authority of India to function in the manner in which such authorities set up in other countries function and to be responsible for formulation of policies as well as their implementation.

14. The Fishery Survey of India should also be technically upgraded by induction of the modern technology and equipment so that it can identify and map the location of all

types of fish, study impact of different technologies and ecological changes. There should be proper coordination and cooperation between the National Remote Sensing Agencies and the Fishery Survey of India for this purpose.

15. The Government should give priority to the creation of the infrastructure needed for preventing wastage of fishery resources which is occurring through throwing away by-catch. This may be achievd by providing a chain of coal storages, ice factories, fish processing facilities, fish meal and feed manufacturing for value addition to the products of fishermen and their cooperatives.

16. Infrastructure facilities such as fishing harbours for the existing and modern upgraded craft along East and West Coasts as well as in Island groups of Lakshadweep and Andaman & Nicobar Islands may be created on priority basis.

17. Fishermen/fisherwomen and their cooperatives may be provided with financial assistance for upgradation and acquisition of larger vessles for marketing and other related activities.

18. The Government should give priority to training fishermen/ fisherwomen in handling new equipment, larger vessels and new fishing techniques besides fish handling and processing aspects.

19. Government should take effective steps to tackle the menace of pollutants/effluents/sewage let out by industries which affects marine life adversely.

20. Government should take a decision on the recommendations of the Committee within a period of six months.

21. The deep sea fishing policy should be revised periodically say every 3—5 years.

Statement II

Action Taken on Recommendations of the Murari Committee (1996)

1. The Murari Committee was appointed in February, 1995 for reviewing the Deep Sea Fishing Policy, 1991 as several objections were raised against the Policy by traditional fishermen. The Committee made 21 recommendations which were accepted by the Government with minor modifications except for Recommendation No. 1. With regard to recommendation No. 1, the decision of the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) was that currently valid permits/permissions may be examined individually in the light of the provision of the Maritime Zones Act for any violation of the provision of the Act on any rule or order made thereunder and/or the conditions stipulated in the approvals granted and action for cancellation or otherwise for such approvals decided in individual cases in consultation with the Ministry of Law. This decision was accordingly implemented.

2. The Deep Sea Fishing Policy, 1991 has been rescinded by the Government. No new permits/extension or renewal of permits/permission under Joint Venture, Leasing, Test Fishing and Charter have been issued since November, 1996.

3. Fishery Survey of India (FSI), Mumbai has been designated as the custodian of all valid permits/permissions under Joint Venture, Leasing and Chartering which are classified as public documents. The copies of permits/permissions were provided to FSI for the same purpose.

4. Being implemented by State Government through respective Marine Fishery Regulation Acts.

5. The issues raised in these recommendations pertain to
6 & 7. delimitation of fishing operations in relation to various classifications of fishing vessels. An Expert Group has been

constituted in December, 1999 by this Ministry to examine these recommendations for drafting a Comprehensive Marine Fishing Policy. The draft comprehensive marine fishing policy is under finalisation by the Expert Group.

8. A National Level Review Committee was constituted by the Ministry of Agriculture in September, 1996 to assess the area-wise requirements of different categories of fishing vessels below 20m and conservation of fishery resources etc. The Committee has completed its deliberations and its report has been received by the Government.

9. Action has been initiated to formulate legislation for regulation of fishing by Indian owned vessels in the EEZ.

10. The Coast Guard is being assisted to procure communication equipments for monitoring operation of fishing vessels in the Indian EEZ. Financial assistance of Rs. 4.87 crores has been provided to the Coast Guard so far for this purpose. Besides, the Ministry is also implementing a Centrally Sponsored Scheme for assisting the maritime States/UTs to effectively implement their Marine Fishing Regulation Acts through acquisition of patrol boats etc.

11. The Ministry of Agriculture is implementing schemes for
& 12. motorisation of traditional crafts by providing subsidy towards the cost of engines and reimbursement of central excise duty on HSD oil to mechanised boats below 20m length.

13. The subejct of marine fisheries including deep sea fishing and processing has been transferred to the Ministry of Agriculture.

14. The FSI is being assisted through a Central Sector Scheme and an EFC memo has been prepared for acquisition of new survey vessels. Adequate linkages with NRSA, and FSI have also been established.

15. The Department of Food Processing Industries is implementing a number of schemes for creation of

infrastructure for cold chains and processing of fish in addition to Research and Development in fish processing.

16. The Ministry of Agriculture is implementing a Centrally Sponsored Scheme for construction of fishing harbours and fish landing centres. Under the Scheme six major fishing harbours, 46 minor fishing harbours and 171 fish landing centres have been sanctioned. Out of these, six major fishing harbours, 32 minor fishing harbours and 130 fish landing centres have been completed.

17. The State Governments are implementing various schemes with the assistance of NCDC, FISHCOPFED etc.

18. The Ministry of Agriculture is implementing a Central Sector Scheme for providing training to fishermen and fisherwomen for skill upgradation. The Department of Food Processing Industries has also formulated a scheme for training of fisher folk in processing etc. and for strengthening of traditional fish processing technologies and in marketing.

19. This recommendation is of general nature which seeks to combat the impact of pollution on marine life. The subject pertains to the Ministry of Environment & Forests.

20 & 21. As is evident, the recommendations of the Murari Committee accepted by the Government are being enforced and implemented. Regarding deep sea fishing policy, the Ministry has established an Expert Group which has been mandated with the task of evolving a Comprehensive policy for Marine Fisheries. The draft comprehensive marine fishing policy is under finalisation by the Expert Group.